

Niko solely blamed for blowout

Probe body submits report; govt waits for 2 other investigation reports

SHARIER KHAN

An energy ministry probe committee has solely blamed the operation failure of Niko Resources for the second blowout in the Chatak gas field at Tengratila in June.

The Canadian explorer was also found guilty of operational failure in another investigation after the first blowout at the same multi-million-dollar gas field on January 7.

The seven-member committee,

headed by Dr Anwarul Azim, submitted an 11-page report to Energy Advisor Mahmudur Rahman yesterday, winding up its nearly two month long investigation.

Azim, vice-chancellor of the Dhaka University of Engineering and Technology (DUET), told journalists that several committee members had suggested scrapping the joint venture agreement between well operator Niko and state-run Bapex.

"But the report did not incorporate the suggestion as it was not under the terms of reference (TOR) of the committee," he said.

As per international practice and the unsolicited contract with Niko, the Canadian operator is to be held solely responsible for the disaster.

"Neither Petrobangla nor Bapex can be blamed for anything in this regard," a committee member told The Daily Star.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Deal with Lahmayer scrapped

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rural Power Company Ltd (RPCL) yesterday cancelled the annual 6 million-dollar operation and maintenance (O&M) contract with Lahmayer International Palli Power Services Ltd (LIPPS) for the 140megawatt (MW) Mymensingh power plants.

The RPCL after taking the decision at its 113th board meeting yesterday served the LIPPS with a legal notice cancelling the contract on the grounds of sabotaging the power plant and a host of other irregularities, a top RPCL source said.

The two Mymensingh units, which the LIPPS shut down illegally on August 4, are now fully operating under direct supervision of the

RPCL staff led by its Managing Director Zahurul Islam.

The Siemens has also resumed in full swing the construction of the third unit 70MW plant that remained stalled for quite some time due to unscrupulous role of the LIPPS, its chief AZ Rezaul Haq alias Captain Reza, and sub-contractor Sky Engineers, the sources said. It has terminated its contract with the Sky Engineers, an enterprise of Captain Reza who also owns the LIPPS.

"The chief of Siemens is coming to Bangladesh very soon in view of the situation created by Reza and his cohorts," said the RPCL source. "Right now 70 staffs are working at

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACKS

Father's death kills his dreams

BISHAWJIT DAS

Pallab's studies came to an abrupt halt as his father Rafiqul Islam, popularly known as Ada Chacha, died in the August 21 carnage last year.

Rezaul Islam Pallab, who was attending the ninth semester of BBA at North South University, had been compelled to discontinue his studies due to financial constraints.

"My ninth semester ended just four days before the attack," Pallab told The Daily Star yesterday, "And since then, for almost a year I've been absenting from the university as my family cannot afford to pay for my studies."

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



PHOTO: STAR

Pallab reads stories compiled from newspapers about his father, who was killed in the August 21 carnage.



PHOTO: STAR

Shop-owners at Mirpur Mazar Cooperatives Market keep the shutters down to protest against Friday's killing of fellow businessman Kazi Shahidullah as they start a strike yesterday.

SHAHIDULLAH MURDER

Traders to keep shops shut till killers' arrest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday held a suspected killer of businessman Kazi Shahidullah while Mirpur traders decided to keep their markets and shops closed for the third consecutive day today demanding immediate arrest and harsh punishment to the killers.

Police said professional killers hired by someone gunned down Shahidullah.

Thousands of traders at all the markets in Mirpur-1 kept their shutters down yesterday. They together with hordes of angry and horrified locals took out processions and staged demonstrations all through the day, condemning the Friday's

brutal attack that also left Shahidullah's eldest son critically wounded.

From a protest rally near Shah Ali Shopping Complex, leaders of local traders associations and market committees and Dhaka City Shop Owners Association declared to go for a tough action programme if the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

SHRINE BOMBING

SP show-caused, OC suspended for laxity

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Brahmanbaria Superintendent of Police (SP) ATM Tareque was show-caused and the Akhaura Police Station officer in-charge (OC) was suspended yesterday for negligence in duty and failure to safeguard the devotees at Kharampur shrine from the midnight bombing spree last Friday.

Sources said the Brahmanbaria Deputy Commissioner (DC) M Sayedur Rahman and the Akhaura Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Mezbah Uddin Chowdhury too will face departmental actions for letting the carnage take place, as the

Cabinet Division has already been instructed to do that.

Meanwhile, 24 hours into the serial bombing that saw one man killed and some 50 others including a policeman wounded, the police are yet to learn the motive for the atrocity or any clue to the identities of the attackers.

However, they suspect two of the injured men now in hospital might have been among the bomb carriers. They are Kamrul, 25, son of Hiron Mia of Comilla, and Dipu, 20, son of Muhammad Ali of Kotwali Thana, Dhaka. Police arrested the two yesterday.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

KM Hasan unacceptable to head caretaker govt: Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday said Justice KM Hasan violated the constitution and breached the oaths by not hearing the Bangabandhu murder case, and raised questions about his credibility to conduct the next election as chief advisor to the caretaker government.

"How will this person [Justice Hasan] protect people's fundamental right to vote as he is a relative of the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and felt embarrassed to hear the murder case?" Hasina said while addressing a

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Emergency declared as Lanka hunts for killers

Tamil rebels deny involvement in Kadirgamar killing

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka declared a state of emergency yesterday after the assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar in an attack denied by Tamil Tiger rebels that could jeopardise the island's peace process.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga appealed for calm after the killing of the 73-year-old minister, a vociferous critic of the Tiger rebels, who were accused by a senior police officer of being behind the attack.

Despite frantic efforts for more

than an hour by doctors to save him, Kadirgamar died in hospital after snipers shot him in the head and chest at his home in Colombo late Friday, officials said.

Soldiers started door-to-door searches in the capital Saturday for the assassins, while police set up roadblocks and air force helicopters circled the sky.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who have led a three-decade-old campaign for a separate homeland within the Indian Ocean island-nation, were prime suspects

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4